



Tips for being an Ally in Aviation

Introduction

What does it mean to be an active ally? How do you contribute to inclusive workspaces that empower people to be their authentic self?

In Canada, only 43% of LGBT workers say they are out professionally¹. According to a 2012 Center for Talent Innovation (US) study, 24% of LGBT workers attribute their decision to come out professionally to a strong network of allies². We can each make a conscious effort each day, to contribute to inclusive spaces.

What are the impacts of these realities in the workplace, and how can the aviation industry leverage and nurture the courage of allies to speak up and behave in ways that promotes an inclusive, safe and respectful workplace for all? As you consider the following tips, we encourage you to adopt a mindset that is bold, curious, brave, compassionate and humble.

Tips

- Seek out and listen to experiences and perspectives different from your own
- Know that “coming out” isn’t a one-time event; virtually every time an LGBTQ+ person encounters a new person or situation, there is a choice to reveal something personal about themselves, and often there is a fear of the reaction
- Keep an open mind
- Don’t make assumptions about gender identity or sexual orientation. If you aren’t sure of someone’s gender identity, based on their expression, then lead with “good morning” and leave out the assumptive language of “sir” or “ma’am”. Ask about someone’s spouse or partner, rather than wife or husband.
- When a Trans colleague or passenger tells you their name and pronouns, use them
- Listen to the experiences of LGBTQ+ colleagues, don’t make assumptions
- Pay attention to how people want to be treated and addressed
- Acknowledge your own prejudices, biases and assumptions
- Allow people to tell their own stories, in their own words
- Be vocal about your support for others, even when LGBTQ+ people aren’t in the room
- Set a good example by using inclusive, affirming language
- Challenge stereotypes as well as biphobic, homophobic and transphobic language and behavior. If you hear it, speak up.
- Understand when to stand beside rather than in-front; LGBTQ+ people require support but don’t necessarily need people to speak for them
- If you make a mistake, apologize once and move on. Take the time to reflect, be curious and confront it within yourself, see it as an opportunity to learn
- Learn about the diverse experiences of LGBTQ+ people, i.e. books, films, articles
- Learn about the ways in which discrimination still exist
- When biphobic, homophobic and transphobic world events take place, reach out to your LGBTQ+ friends and coworkers to offer support



¹ Telus study, Workplace Safety for LGBTQ employees, 2016

² Center for Talent Innovation, The Power of Out 2.0 - LGBT in the Workplace, 2013